



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

150 South Main Street • Providence, RI 02903
(401) 274-4400 • www.riag.ri.gov

Peter F. Neronha
Attorney General

July 29, 2020

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chairman
House Committee on Finance
State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Amendment to H7171 - FY 2021 Budget Article 5: New State Health Laboratory

Dear Chairman Abney:

I write today in support of the amendment to Article 5 of the FY 2021 Budget providing for construction of a new state health laboratory.

The \$107 million investment contained within will benefit public health. The ongoing COVID-19 crisis illustrates the lack of and need for greater testing capacity and modernized facilities. A new health laboratory will help our State prepare for and address similar challenges in the future by enhancing the ability to test, monitor, and investigate infectious diseases.

Additionally, as the State's sole felony prosecutor, our Office relies on the Department of Health's testing facilities for toxicology, DNA, and other tests which are crucial to resolving serious criminal cases in a just and efficient manner. A new state health laboratory will allow for decreased turnaround time for completion of these tests which will, as a result, advance our public safety mission.

I urge this Committee to support this worthy initiative. Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Peter F. Neronha
Attorney General

CC: House Committee on Finance